

Early Childhood Iowa: Lakes Region and Decategorization

Serving Clay, Dickinson, O'Brien, and Osceola Counties



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Vision and Mission: To provide services collaboratively to families and children birth to 18 years of age for the purpose of improving the quality of life for families with children.

Did you know? “When we strengthen families, we ultimately strengthen the community. Our goal is that parents everywhere work with supportive providers, feel confident in their parenting role, and form strong, resilient attachments with their children. To help achieve this, providers must be responsive to parents, knowledgeable about child development, and eager to see every parent succeed.” *T. Berry Brazelton, MD, www.brazeltontouchpoints.org*

Local story: During FY12 the Hand in Hand program was redesigned to focus more specifically on the healthy mental and social development of children in early care and learning environments. Here are some comments from providers:

****I learned about being open to child’s perspective on situations. Remember we only see the “tip of the iceberg;” great analogy!!** ****When just observing I can be much more objective – see the big picture. Too often providers get caught up in assumptions of children behavior. Don’t jump to conclusions. Children have a reason for their behavior. Learn to watch for signs and be open-minded.** **** I think the Hand in Hand program is great!! The Hand in Hand Coach came into my home and helped me with a few of my children that are having social problems. She taught me how to make social stories and how to help the children to learn about emotions and what they are feeling. I found her very flexible and very willing to work around my schedule. She was able to give me many resources to use such as books, websites, and etc. She was very knowledgeable on the subjects and was very organized. I really enjoyed the program and hope to see it continue. It is nice to have the extra support as a home provider!! Thanks.** **** The changes I am already making are to be more positive in my response to problems & situations and give more positive help and direction. New motto “Positive ways lead to positive results!”**

Why are the programs we support important to reaching our vision and mission?

- We know that children require strong, safe, and nurturing families who are able to meet their emotional, physical, and developmental needs. Our family support programs assist parents in creating and providing responsive home environments.
- Prevent Child Abuse America reports that abused children are more likely to experience adverse consequences in multiple developmental domains, as well as adverse outcomes throughout their lives in several areas. ECI Lakes Region programs (see box below) address this issue through the services they provide.
- Quality, nurturing early care and education environments, in addition to healthy, supportive families, are essential for children to succeed in school and life. Our services to early care and learning environments teach, coach, and support providers to meet the healthy mental and social development of children in their care.

Community Plan Priorities:

- Strengthen the relationship between parents and their children through the provision of quality family support programs
- Improve the health and wellness of infants
- Improve the quality of early care and learning environments

Services, programs, and activities supported by ECI: Lakes Region

Relationship building is the foundation of our work with families, providers, and community partners. The core programs and services of ECI: Lakes Region include:

- An early childhood mental health collaborative promoting the Social, Emotional, Educational Development (SEED) needs of young children is implementing strategies and services to address the various tiers of Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS) and to promote the healthy mental wellness of young children.
- KIDS and Best Care for Better Babies are family support programs that provide home-based parent education/support, child development screenings/services, health education, and resource networking. The KIDS program was the first program to be awarded the Iowa Family Support Credential.
- The Hand in Hand program provides resources, education, and advocacy for children, parents, and child care providers. Services to center, preschool, and home providers focus on the healthy mental development of young children.
- ECI: Lakes Region has strong collaborative relationships with other community agencies and organizations. We partner with them to provide professional development and training to ECI: Lakes Region program staff, child care providers, preschool staff, parents, and community members.

Babies are born with a drive to relate to and connect with others, and they continue to develop the social skills necessary to form strong, healthy relationships throughout their lives. *Zero to Three*: www.zerotothree.org

How do we measure our progress?

1. Percent of confirmed abused children 5 years and younger

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
KIDS Program	1%	1%	2%	1%	8%	5%	4%
ECI: Lakes Region	45.9%	47.5%	47.1%	54.7%	52.9%	49.1%	58.9%
State	49.1%	49.4%	50.6%	53.1%	51.5%	50.8%	50.8%

How are we doing? Families participating in the ECI: Lakes Region KIDS program have significantly lower abuse rates than those in the ECI: LR four county area. The 2011 statistics for the overall four county area show a significant increase which correlates with other data we reported in the F Y12 Community Plan. Across the area families are experiencing increasing, complex problems that impact their children.

2. Immunized children (fully immunized at a public clinic) by 24 months of age

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
ECI: Lakes Region	97%	97%	99%	89%	93%	82%	72%
State	94%	94%	95%	88%	84%	69%	64%

How are we doing? Children in the four county ECI: Lakes Region consistently have higher rates of full immunizations by age 24 months, and children whose families participate in the ECI: LR funded family support programs have even higher rates.

3. Screening for Postpartum Depression

“Education and greater public awareness about conditions such as postpartum depression can help dispel some of the misconceptions that keep women suffering in secrecy.” *Zero to Three Journal, May 2009 Volume 29 No. 5*

How are we doing? The Best Care for Better Babies program screens mothers for postpartum depression using the Edinburgh Postpartum Depression Screening tool. In FY12:

- 89% of mothers participating in Best Care for Better Babies were screened for postpartum depression (PPD).
- 16% of mothers were identified as having PPD.
- 100% of mothers identified with PPD were referred for further services; 86% accessed and obtained services.

What can you do to help?

- Contact the ECI: Lakes Region office at 712-332-2581 or access the website at www.ecilakesregion.com to learn about our services, connect to our programs, link to resources for families with young children, volunteer to be a board member, participate on local planning groups, or for general information and questions.
- Talk with your local legislators and encourage them to support and fund services for young children and their parents. Register to vote! Vote!
- Visit the Early Childhood Iowa website (www.earlychildhoodiowa.org) to learn more about Iowa’s activities and initiatives that support families. Check out the “Parents” link on the home page!

Others within our community working on similar issues:

- Local planning groups in Clay, Dickinson, O’Brien, and Osceola counties
- Upper Des Moines Opportunity, Inc. (programs such as Head Start, Early Head Start, Parent Partners), Mid Sioux Child Care Resource and Referral, and Matura Child Care Nurse Consultant
- Prairie Lakes AEA, Northwest AEA, and local school districts
- DCAT, Community Partnerships for Protecting Children, Priority One, Dream Center, Cherish House/Cherish Center, Atlas, Love, Inc.
- Local child abuse prevention councils
- Community agencies and organizations